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SUBJECT: WEST AFRICAN STATES ASK FOR HELP IN COMBATING
TERRORISM

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) held an informal meeting on July 11 to address the technical assistance needs of West African states in fulfilling their counter-terrorism obligations under Security Council resolution 1373. Present at the meeting were members of the CTED staff, West African member states, potential and current technical assistance providers, and a number of non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations. The West African recipient states mentioned many common areas in which they require technical assistance during the meeting. In response, donor states and organizations expressed a willingness to offer aid to the West African states in a variety of ways. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Chairman of the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) Ambassador Ricardo Alberto Arias noted that technical assistance is most effective on a regional and sub-regional basis because neighboring states face similar challenges. He characterized this meeting as an opportunity for providers of technical assistance and West African recipient states to engage in dialogue on effective terrorism prevention. Arias also stressed the need for a coherent global approach to counter-terrorism.

¶3. (U) Sergey Karev, Officer-in-Charge of CTED, remarked that West African states lack key technology and sufficient funds to implement counter-terrorism conventions and resolutions. He outlined CTED's three major goals in facilitating technical assistance. One goal is to collect and analyze information about West African shortfalls in implementation. Another goal is to organize consultation on these shortfalls. The last goal is to find and match donor states to provide technical assistance to the West African states. Karev described the CTED matrix, which organizes technical assistance data, as a good tool to provide information on states, needs or resources as well as to avoid duplication of assistance efforts. He stated that the goals of the meeting were to improve relationships between donors and recipients and to promulgate a regional approach to capacity building per UN Resolution 1373.

¶4. (U) CTED Section Chief Ahmed Seif El-Dawla argued that sub-regional cooperation is imperative: if one state has effective counter-terrorism measures and its neighbors do not, terrorism will not be prevented but rather migrate to neighboring countries, rendering the overall result of the state's counter-terrorism measures ineffectual. He also noted that donor states are more encouraged to contribute technical assistance when regions and sub-regions are stable, and that stability helps counter-terrorism programs succeed. Seif El-Dawla also stressed the importance of preventing terrorist exploitation of domestic weaknesses. To that end, he noted that while 1373 is beneficial, West African states in particular still need help in order to effectively implement compliance measures. He added that this need for help is especially critical in light of other West African

concerns such as debt repayment and development.

15. (U) Seif El-Dawla described CTED's two-prong approach to fighting terrorism. The first prong involves facilitating the exchange of information between donor and recipient states within the framework of the 14 established categories of technical assistance. The second prong involves promoting the importance of the UN counter-terrorism strategy adopted in September 2006 through capacity building and coordination with 1373 efforts. He also outlined the most important areas where donor states can provide technical assistance: drafting and adopting legislation to implement international conventions and protocols, strengthening financial laws and practices like the ability to freeze terrorist funds, funneling resources to law enforcement institutions, improving border control lapses (especially where such lapses amplify weapons smuggling and terrorist recruitment and training), and encouraging submission of data so that donor states can better target their resources.

16. (U) Representatives from Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Cape Verde, and Togo made statements summarizing their current counter-terrorism efforts and their outstanding technical assistance needs. Most states expressed a commitment to international cooperation, a willingness to combat terrorism within their borders, and a desire to comply with 1373 and other international counter-terrorism conventions. However, states also noted a number of areas in which they have had extreme difficulties that hinder their efforts at compliance. Many common themes and problems emerged.

LACK OF RESOURCES

17. (U) Almost every West African state reported an inability to implement counter-terrorism conventions and protocols because of a lack of all types of resources. Many states noted the scarcity of financial resources. Many states also mentioned their need for technical resources like computers, detection equipment, and monitoring equipment. Most states also complained of a lack of human resources on many levels: they quantitatively lack personnel, and the personnel they do have are also in acute need of training. Areas in which training is most critically needed include technology and computers, financial intelligence, and customs and border control.

BORDER CONTROL

18. (U) Similarly, almost every state complained about a number of border control problems. States reported these types of problems at land borders as well as at ports. States attributed a variety of problems to porous, poorly-guarded borders: smuggling of small arms and light weapons, and trafficking of drugs and humans. These states requested many types of technical assistance to combat these problems: more customs and border officials staff, enhanced training for these types of staff members, financial aid, and technical resources such as computers, airport x-ray machines, and surveillance mechanisms.

SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

19. (U) Some states also complained about the threat posed by small arms and light weapons, and asked for help in combating this problem. Mali noted problems in marking and tracking these weapons, in large part because of its porous borders. Sierra Leone similarly noted the ease with which

such weapons can be trafficked. Benin noted the adverse effect of international organized crime on the presence of small arms and light weapons within its borders.

OTHER ISSUES

¶10. (U) There were a number of other areas where states requested help. Mali, Sierra Leone, and Cape Verde asked for assistance in drafting and passing national legislation that would strengthen domestic counter-terrorism measures and aid compliance with international conventions. Benin, Guinea, and Liberia noted the destabilizing effects of regional fighting on their counter-terrorism efforts. Liberia also expressed fears that former fighters may be recruited and utilized by terrorist organizations because of their battle experience and failure to be reintegrated into civil society.

Some states complained about weak domestic financial institutions and the prevalence of money laundering within their borders, and requested help in strengthening those institutions to counteract these problems. Gambia asked for aid in capacity building, and complained that previous requests for help have gone unanswered. Benin noted its difficulty in complying with UN resolution 1540 and asked for help in the following areas: defining standards for compiling passenger information and warnings, establishing minimum standards for travel documents and biometric techniques, defining minimum standards to verify the authenticity of identification at borders, drafting legal instruments for nuclear terrorism, and monitoring dual use instruments. Nigeria expressed displeasure at defining technical assistance in terms of recipient and donor states, noting that there were areas in which countries that are underdeveloped can nevertheless share their innovations with other countries. Guinea noted the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism in the region such as poverty and instability, and many West African states, recipient states, and organizations echoed this sentiment.

¶11. (U) A number of donor states outlined the technical assistance they have provided so far, and noted the areas in which they can provide further help. The states that spoke were Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, the United States, Denmark, Egypt, Portugal, and Russia. The U.S. described its assistance to the Trans-Sahara Counter-terrorism Partnership (see para 17). Most states praised the regional and sub-regional approach to technical assistance, and expressed

varying levels of ability to financially aid West African states in combating terrorism. Germany, Italy, Japan, and Egypt noted concerns about the effect of money laundering and weak financial institutions within West Africa. Germany, Spain, Japan, Denmark, and Egypt also expressed willingness to help West African countries with capacity building, and with drafting and implementing domestic legislation.

¶12. (U) Various international organizations explained the ways in which they could aid West African states in their counter-terrorism efforts. The organizations that presented were the African Union, the European Commission, Intergovernmental Action Group Against Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing in West Africa (GIABA), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Interpol, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Center (UNICRI), the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The organizations obviously vary in their areas of expertise and their abilities to help West African states. However, most organizations expressed willingness to use their capabilities to work within the existing frameworks of the states and to aid the states, efforts in implementing their policies.

¶13. (U) GIABA's legal expert, Juliet Ume-Ezeoke Ibekaku, gave a comprehensive presentation about GIABA's efforts to

combat money laundering and terrorism financing. She noted that while many West African states have instituted anti-money laundering legislation, the legislation does not incorporate the best and most efficient practices. In order to improve the inadequate financial laws of these states and to increase enforcement of these policies, GIABA provides varying types of aid, from help with legislative drafting and implementation to providing office and technical equipment to the states to aiding states in conducting self-assessments. However, Ibekaku noted that GIABA faces severe budgetary and resource constraints. Its budget is \$149,000, and it has only 7 staff members. She concluded that these shortages hinder GIABA's effectiveness in helping West African states counter money laundering and terrorist financing, especially in light of the fact that many of the states often lack the political will to pass or implement policies on their own.

¶14. (U) Seif Al-Dawla described CTED's two tools of technical assistance. The first tool is the matrix, which gives snapshot information on recipient states, technical assistance needs and dates when donor states offered help so that potential providers can avoid duplicating aid efforts. The second tool is the directory of assistance, which is an up-to-date index of the ways in which donor states, the UN, and international organizations can help states in need of assistance. Robert Meyer, the Associate Information Management Officer for CTED, gave a brief demonstration how to use the directory. The representative from Senegal inquired whether the directory would be in languages other than English and noted potential problems in translating the site from English. CTED responded that the first priority is to complete the directory, and that once that is accomplished they will ask that part of the budget be allocated to updating the site in French. CTED also noted that member states can contact CTED directly for clarification or help. The representative from Sierra Leone asked whether the matrix could be used in order to request assistance or whether it was merely intended as a repository for information. CTED responded that it can be used for both purposes, and that CTED's goal involves both consultation on and prioritization of requests for help. Egypt's representative asked whether the matrix indicated what kinds of assistance have been offered; in response, CTED only noted that the matrix indicates the contact information of states. The IMF representative wanted to know how CTED plans to manage the matrix. CTED answered that states do not have to go through CTED in order to request or receive assistance; they encourage states to use CTED and at the very least to report assistance efforts regardless of their source, but state are not precluded from requesting help through the IMF.

¶15. (U) A number of states had comments and questions for CTED. Burkina Faso expressed gratitude that the donor states had listened and responded to the difficulties faced by West African states, but criticized GIABA's characterization of West African political will and noted that GIABA itself was a creation of West African states. Egypt asked for clarification of CTED's role in helping states prepare reports for the matrix and wanted to know how CTED intends to avoid duplication of aid efforts. Nigeria also inquired about CTED's efforts to avoid duplication in light of the fact that there are a number of agencies and sub-regional organizations that focus on counter-terrorism. Karev

responded that CTED avoids duplication by working in concert with other UN agencies, and that given the varied functions of the different agencies, duplication of efforts is largely avoided. Lastly, Nigeria applauded Japan's focus on root causes of terrorism like poverty, and urged other states to adopt a similar focus. Karev noted that while efforts to combat root causes of terrorism are necessary, such activity falls outside the scope of CTED's mandate.

¶16. (U) Karev concluded the conference by highlighting common themes and next steps. He characterized the meeting as a success in publicizing the technical assistance needs of West African states, something helpful for recipient states,

donor states, and organizations. He commented that since most West African states have similar problems, multilateral cooperation between both donors and recipients should be considered a useful supplement to bilateral consultation and aid. Karev ended the meeting by explaining CTED's upcoming plans to aid West African states, which involves drafting work action plans that develop programs of common interest for West African states and taking these plans to donors to spur bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

¶17. (U) Drawing on material provided by the Department, USUN made the following statement:

Begin text. I would like to thank CTED for convening this very important meeting. A theme which pervades the discussion of countering terrorism in the Security Council and General Assembly is the need for international cooperation. Unfortunately, we are all faced with the threat of terrorism. We are in this together, and communication and cooperation are absolutely essential. Against this backdrop, the United States is encouraged by the response and quality of participation today. In particular, we have noted the preparation and participation of African states whose representatives have seriously and with specificity outlined their needs. We have listened and will endeavor to respond.

Let me mention what we are doing at present in this regard. The United States and nine African countries created the Trans-Sahara Counter-terrorism Partnership in 2005. The nine African countries are Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Nigeria. The U.S. supports the partnership with resources and expertise from multiple agencies in the U.S. federal government including the State department, USAID, and the Department of Defense.

The partnership is a multi-faceted multi-year commitment focused on improving individual country and regional capabilities to defeat terrorist organizations, disrupt efforts to recruit and train new terrorist fighters, particularly from the young and rural poor, and counter efforts to establish safe havens for domestic and outside extremist groups.

Fiscal Year 2007 funding for this partnership is approximately \$143 million, and of this \$143 million, \$7.2 million was spent on specialized counter-terrorism assistance training, including work with non-military units tasked with prevention, response, and investigation of terrorist activities (examples of this are border police, crime investigators, and efforts in Ministries of the Interior). This funding came from the State Department under the Nonproliferation Anti-terrorism De-mining Reconstruction account, and can be used to support programming for non-military individuals and units engaged in specialized counter-terrorism activities.

The United States wants you as our partners in combating terrorism and will continue to work with you to this end. Thank you. End text.

KHALILZAD